

way historians approach the history of Western science and medicine. In this case, demonstrating how European and British tropical practitioners were pivotal to the development of 'modern' British medicine is perhaps enough of an achievement for the time being.

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John S. Haller Jr., *Swedenborg, Mesmer, and the Mind/Body Connection: The Roots of Complementary Medicine*, Swedenborg Studies, No. 19 (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 2010), pp. xxi + 321, \$29.95, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-87785-331-2.

In his search for the intellectual foundations of America's contemporary New Age and alternative medicine movements, John S. Haller Jr. concentrates on the Swedish polymath Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) and the German physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), whose meditative and non-mechanistic worldviews were, the author maintains, deeply implicated in the phrenology, spiritualism, mind cure, Christian Science, and homeopathy movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the osteopathy, anthroposophy, holistic health, and New Age healing practices of the twentieth century (p. xv). Haller attempts to elucidate these connections by examining the thought and healing systems that Swedenborg and Mesmer offered their contemporaries before tracing the uptake and evolution of these philosophies between the late eighteenth century and the present day. In the course of the book, Haller makes clear his conviction that the epistemic space occupied by contemporary complementary medicine in America was first made available by Swedenborg and Mesmer, who fought during the eighteenth century to rescue a vitalist view of mind and body from annihilation at the

hands of Enlightenment rationalism and materialism.

The first two chapters of the book provide an intellectual biography of Swedenborg, detailing the family background and early years of a man who came to demonstrate genius in areas as diverse as engineering, geology, physics, metallurgy, philosophy, and physiology. Haller shows how Swedenborg's eclectic interests led him slowly towards a vitalistic worldview, and how a spiritual crisis on a trip to London in 1745 saw him eventually evolve from philosopher to theologian, and finally to mystic (p. 33).

The third chapter concentrates on the healing system introduced by Mesmer, arguing for a strong affinity between the spirit-infused universe of Swedenborg, and that of the Swabian physician, who believed that magnetic tides coursed through both the universe and the human body dictating illness and health. Haller argues that both men affirmed the existence of an unseen dimension to the Universe (p. 68) and that although Mesmer's theory was naturalistic, it was ambiguous enough that, like the writings of Swedenborg, it too could be interpreted as offering access to the spirit realm (p. 69). Looking at the manner in which animal magnetism was spread and filtered by various other practitioners, Haller shows how both its mystical and medicinal aspects evolved through the related practices of phrenology and phreno-mesmerism during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Turning from Europe to America, Chapters Four and Five attempt to trace Swedenborg's and Mesmer's legacy in socialism, Owenism, Fourierism, and various communal experiments (Chapter Four), as well as the emergence, from the mid-nineteenth century, of movements such as spiritualism, theosophy, anthroposophy, and psychical research (Chapter Five). Chapter Six deals with the mind-cure or mental science movement, which manifested in Christian Science and the Emmanuel movement, while Chapter Seven looks at biomedicine's kindred spirits such as homeopathy, Kentianism, osteopathy, and

chiropractics. The final chapter considers the continuation of all these traditions within New Age healing.

Haller's concentration on the American manifestation of Mesmer's and Swedenborg's ideas allows him to document, in some detail, the New Age movement's complex genealogy, but also means that he is necessarily brief in his descriptions of the spread of American movements, such as spiritualism, to Europe and beyond. While this brevity is entirely understandable, there are some instances where broad statements about the reception of such movements are unsupported or non-illuminating. The claim that Europeans were more sceptical of spiritualism than Americans (pp. 144–5), for example, begs a range of questions, including 'in which European countries was this the case' and 'why'?

While Haller's book provides a useful synthesis of the disparate mystical, spiritual, and communitarian movements that have, in some sense, been heir to the ideas of Swedenborg or Mesmer, it remains doubtful whether his account adds any analytical depth to our understanding of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American alternative medicine and religious practice. Much of the material Haller uses, and the trajectory and links that he highlights, have long been apparent in the work of historians such as James Webb, Laurence R. Moore and Brett E. Carroll, who have all written on occultism and spiritualism in the American context. The attempts at scientification that Haller highlights among New Age healers, which he stresses serve to undermine the mechanistic science from which they draw authority (p. 231), have also been dealt with elsewhere and in more depth by sociologists such as David J. Hess, whose book *Science in the New Age* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993) provided a probing analysis of the relationship between science and the New Age movement.

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Jan Goldstein, *Hysteria Complicated by Ecstasy: The Case of Nanette Leroux* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. xi + 246, £20.95/\$29.95, hardcover, ISBN: 978-0-691-01186-8.

The body, Sigmund Freud observed, is a vessel of meaning. Creating symptoms, speaking the unspeakable, it is a psychological battlefield where illness is *played out* – a symbol.

Freudian hysteria, of course, was symptomatic: it revealed the pathologies of an era, the ills and drama and fantasy of *fin-de-siècle* imagination. If the mythical female malady has generated a plethora of contemporary commentary, studies on cases of the pre-Belle Époque variety remain relatively scarce. Here, Jan Goldstein presents a previously unpublished manuscript that she has brought to life in two sections, a translated excerpt of the original nineteenth-century document preceded by a substantial twenty-first-century analysis.

Nanette Leroux, a peasant girl living in Savoy under the Piedmontese Restoration, starts manifesting nervous symptoms in the early 1820s after having been assaulted by a rural policeman. Convulsions, lethargy, catalepsy – all appear to the eighteen-year-old girl in *bona fide* hysterical form. Following Nanette's failure to respond to various treatments, a respected physician and owner of a celebrated therapeutic spa resort, Dr Antoine Despine (1777–1852), decides to admit her as a charity patient, using the methods of hydrotherapy and 'animal magnetism' (later renamed 'hypnotism'). Shortly following the three-year treatment, Despine entrusts his notes to Dr Alexandre Bertrand (1795–1831), a promising Parisian physician writing a large (eventually unfinished) opus on catalepsy, ecstasy, magnetism and somnambulism. It is this text – Bertrand's, with some of Despine's original passages – that constitutes the aforementioned manuscript.

Why is this story interesting? Its format, for one thing. The Leroux case, Goldstein remarks, presents an 'excessive length' for the